


**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please replace paragraph [0003] with the following amended paragraph.

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 [0003] By way of background, a commonly assigned, co-pending patent application (U.S. Serial No. 09/721,726 (filed November 27, 2000) to Marshall entitled "A Method for Sliding Window Image Processing of Associative Operators" (Attorney Docket No. D/A0827)) ("the '726 application") (now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,714,694 B1) -- which is incorporated herein by this reference -- describes a method for fast computation of associative operators for a fixed size window in one dimension. As disclosed therein, by repeating the process, it may be extended to application to a rectangular window in two dimensions. However, the rectangular shape is usually not ideal for image processing operations. Regions that more closely resemble circles yield better results.

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